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RESPONSES TO OPEN LETTER TO LEADERS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, OF JANUARY 15, 1989 (Published in *The Eclectic Theosophist*, March/April 1989)

That letter invited recipients "to share with our readers your views about the wisdom, usefulness, and/or need of an informal meeting together of heads of today's main Theosophical Societies." Here then are the responses. —Ed.

*Mrs. Dorothy Abbenhouse, National President,
American Section T.S. (Adyar): (January 31, 1989):*

I believe that the Conference of Theosophical Leaders that you proposed in your open letter could indeed be a 'positive factor in sounding a strong note of basic theosophic aim and purpose.' It would be useful, providing all come to it with 'open minds, pure hearts, eager intellects, and unveiled spiritual perception', as the Golden Stairs advises. If we could all meet to share our views, our concerns, our goals without judgment, without bringing up past history, then probably we would be able to reach that inner cooperation and understanding you speak so eloquently of in your letter. But, if we meet to chew on old bones, as it were, it would be, frankly in my view, a waste of time, money and effort.

Again, if differences could be explained, described dispassionately so that all views would be respected that would be useful. Do you think this is possible? If the decision is to have such a Conference, I would support it to the extent our Theosophical Society in America's National Board would approve.

Mrs. Irmgard Scheithauer, Die Theosophische Gesellschaft, Arbeitskreis (Berlin): (Feb. 2, 1989): Regarding a possible meeting of "Leaders of the Theosophical Movement." Everything with regard

to the overall idea seems alright with me: Co-operation always— as long as it does not mean diminishing the teachings or belittling our Leaders and/or Founders.

Dr. Hugh Gray, General Secretary, The Theosophical Society in England, (Feb. 13, 1989)

Thank you for your open letter to leaders of the theosophical movement concerning the possibility of promoting a meeting of theosophical leaders.

I have discussed this suggestion with members of my Executive Committee and the general view was that this might be useful and constructive if welcomed by the majority of the leaders you mention.

I would certainly count myself among those as thinking of your proposal as being sound and constructive.

Miss Willy Schmit, Director, School for the Study of the Esoteric Philosophy, The Hague, The Netherlands. (March 7, 1989)

Your Open Letter of January 15, 1989, makes too strong an appeal to all calling themselves Theosophists to be neglected. Moreover, it seems reasonable (to me) that Leaders of Theosophical Associations or groups come together in order to give an exposition of their work, their thoughts for the future, and at the same time lend a willing ear to each other's viewpoints.

The daily life in the everyday world is based on trust in each other. We, calling ourselves Theosophists, are bound by trust also. Having had the good karma of receiving the teachings of Theosophy we should daily remind ourselves that they are given to us in order to help and instruct others less fortunate. So I think it would be a good thing to meet together, to consult each other. It is a great opportunity.

On behalf of the School at The Hague, our sincere greetings.

Mrs. Françoise Caracostea, General Secretary, French Section (Theosophical Society, Adyar), on behalf of the Board. (March 9, 1989)

It was with real interest that we came to know your proposal, expressed in your open letter dated January 15th, 1989, during our last meeting of the Board.

For several years now we have been on friendly terms with the different branches of the Theosophical Movement in France. For instance, each year a distinguished member of the U.L.T. gives a lecture in our Headquarters, and during our last SD Conference we welcomed two members from ULT, and their talks were very much appreciated. Regularly our magazine *Le Lotus Bleu* publishes news about the Network and interviews of leaders of the Theosophical Movement...on this subject.

Friendly relationship does not imply cooperation; but can there be more than just friendly relationship for the time being? Maybe there could be seminars and conferences on definite theosophical themes organized conjointly. We think that could be the next step.

Mr. Herman Vermeulen, Leader, The Theosophical Society (Pasadena-Covina), Blavatskyhuis, The Hague, The Netherlands: (May 2, 1989):

I received your 'open letter' in which you ask for my opinion on your proposition to increase contacts between the heads of Theosophical organizations.

Over the past four years, during which I have been bearing the responsibility for the Theosophical Society (Point Loma/Covina/The Hague), I have given my opinion on this subject wherever possible: co-operation between Theosophical organizations is a very good thing, provided this is done in the interest of the aims of the Theosophical Movement: to disseminate Theosophy in its pure form for the benefit of mankind's spiritual welfare. For this purpose I welcome contacts between leaders of Theosophical organizations, and would regard a meeting of theosophical leaders as helpful and instructive.

[Further views of Mr. Vermeulen are clearly expressed in his article in *Theosophical Network*, Autumn 1988, to which readers are referred.

Mr. Vicente Hao Chin, Jr., President, The Theosophical Society of the Philippines (May 11, 1989)

Excuse me for not replying yet to your open letter in the January issue of the *Eclectic*. I have been neck deep in publications, travels, and construction matters which prevented me from reviewing the initial draft that I made immediately after reading your article. [No letter received, but, July 21, 1989, a phone call: "Yes, I approve very much such an informal meeting."]

Georg and Ursula Schwarm, Nurnberg, Germany (May 20, 1989):

Thank you very much for the Open Letter! We agree to your suggestion of a 'meeting together of heads of today's main Theosophical Societies', which you made therein. We think it is a good time for such a project, and we also think it is very important to speak together.

Mr. Walter Jahn, President The Theosofisch Genootschap H.P.B., The Hague, The Netherlands (June 6, 1989):

With some reluctance I respond to your appeal in your letter of May 28, 1989. Not because I don't agree; on the contrary, but because I think that at least in Holland the time is not yet ripe for it, and also that the Dutch members are not either.

In spite of my efforts to come to a constructive co-operation with other theosophical organizations in The Netherlands, so far nothing has come from it. The contacts are limited to a few persons of each organization rather than to the organizations as a whole. Yet, in my opinion, brotherhood lives in the hearts of the members of all groups, the opposition lying in the outer form of the organizations. We ourselves, for instance, don't have a personal leader. We still consider G.deP. the leader we had.

Finally I would like to emphasize that all Theosophical Groups in Holland are doing a fine job and making every possible effort to spread the

Theosophical teachings where and wherever they can. Everyone tries to keep the lamp burning, each in his own way, and in that purpose we are united !

Miss Grace F. Knoche, Leader, The Theosophical Society (Pasadena) (June 19, 1989):

You ask for my views about "the wisdom, usefulness, and/or need of an informal meeting together of heads of today's main Theosophical Societies."

Let me say first that our Headquarters welcomes theosophists of any affiliation, and independent students, and this goes for our various Sections as well. I agree with you, however, that "formal union" would be impractical organizationally; and, of course, any attempt to force such a union could jeopardize the very harmony and friendship that have been quietly growing over the years between our Society—at Headquarters and elsewhere—and officials and members of the Adyar Society and associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. For instance, for the past several years I have been in cordial contact with both Radha Burnier and Henry Geiger.

I might add that since we opened our Library to the public in the spring of 1972, our research facilities have been utilized by ULT members in the US and abroad, and also by Adyar members, which has brought about spontaneous friendships and cooperation.

My feeling is that nature is already taking its course, and when the time and circumstances are right for a more formal meeting, we will all know it.

Mrs. Radha Burnier, International President, The Theosophical Society, (Adyar, Madras, India):

No response.

Mr. Hermann Knoblauch, Leader Die Theosophische Gesellschaft "Esoterische Philosophie", Hanover, W.Germany

No response.

Mr. S.L.Trelor, Gen. Secretary, The Theosophical Society of Canada (Adyar):

No response.

And from other Theosophists who of their own, or as heads of their Lodge or Group, have written:

Mr. Jan van der Sluis, Rotterdam, Holland (Feb. 25, 1989):

What a wonderful gesture, your Open Letter to leaders of the Theosophical Movement. I think it just what G. deP. meant. It is another chance, another opportunity, and pity those who do not catch it. Formal union today is not possible (desirable ?), but informal union is not only possible, but even necessary! Why cannot there be ONE membership, which means that all Societies, etc., recognize the membership of their specific organization just the same as that of their fellow-Theosophists from other groups, Societies. So meetings of all groups, e.g. 'closed' meetings are open to all theosophists of whatever denomination; we all belong to the Movement, don't we?

Was not the fifteenth of January, when you wrote/sent the letter, G. deP.'s birthday? Poor world, so desperately in need of real Theosophy, and what do we offer? Unbelievable behavior....

Mrs. Pervin Mistry, Mississauga, Ont., Canada (May 30, 1989)

The message of Brotherhood and Networking, in the true spirit and meaning of Theosophy, has always gone forth to other Theosophists from Point Loma in the past, and it is time that we, in the present, embrace this message wholeheartedly and respond constructively.

Let us unite and let us respect certain rules, laws, and guidelines. By being disciplined, we are not being dogmatic! Let us embrace Networking, Brotherhood, Theosophy and become like beacons to the needy fellow-humans; but let us also be wise and cautious.

Mr. Ernest Pelletier, President, Edmonton Lodge of the Theosophical Society in Canada (April 27, 1989):

Further to your Open Letter published in the March/April issue of *The Eclectic Theosophist*, enclosed are my personal thoughts on the subject. [He had earlier, February 27, 1989, written: "I wonder

what kind of response you will receive to your Open Letter. This matter can no longer be ignored...”]

[We now quote in full the letter of April 27, headed:]

AN OPEN RESPONSE

Unity within the Theosophical Movement, as we know, has been attempted many times since first proposed by G. dePurucker; renewed efforts are currently underway. So far the most common approach has been a “call to the table” of the leaders of the various Theosophical Societies with the hope of achieving compromise and understanding through an open discussion.

Although it is certainly true that the various theosophical organizations, each in their own unique and positive way, attempt to promulgate Theosophy, it is equally true that many of these organizations do not recognize each other or acknowledge the value of the others’ efforts. It is this tragic divisiveness which prevents the Greater Theosophical Movement from “sounding a strong note of basic theosophic aim and purpose, one that could strongly influence world thought.” (*Eclectic*, No.110, Mar/Apr. 1989)

The leaders of organizations which have failed to value each others’ efforts towards the achievement of a great and common goal, namely Universal Brotherhood, cannot in fairness be expected to participate in an open “across the table” discussion. Even if these individuals agree to an “informal meeting”, unless there is preliminary work done to encourage a commitment to openness and trust at such a gathering, the attempt will be doomed from the start. The end result would be mere words...no substance.

With this in mind, here is a proposal for consideration:

Compromise and understanding between the diverse Theosophical organizations must be built upon the firm foundation of mutual respect and tolerance. This can best be achieved by contact through a ‘negotiator’ who would help to create an atmosphere of trust, one in which individuals need not feel threatened or vulnerable but rather develop a sense of confidence in the negotiating process.

The ‘negotiator’ would meet with each leader who is willing on an individual basis. In this manner negotiations could be carried on and compromises and understanding of the common ground, achieved before the leaders ever meet “across the table”.

The success of such an endeavor would, of course, rest on the spirit of compromise prevalent during these discussions.

The following thoughts must ever be borne in mind:

IF we are satisfied with the impact that the Theosophical movement has had in the world to date...then WE ARE LOST.

IF we are satisfied that we have attracted enough of the keen thinkers and sincere seekers of TRUTH to the Theosophical movement...then WE ARE LOST.

IF we fail to ‘TRY’... then WE ARE LOST.

IF the members of the various Theosophical Societies have Universal Brotherhood, the first object of our Movement, in Mind, Soul and Spirit, then we have a chance; if not...then WE ARE LOST.

‘The plan’ has purposely been left vague; it is ever so simple to attack an idea on its “details” before giving it serious consideration.

—Ernest E. Pelletier

And the United Lodge of Theosophists?

The death of Henry Geiger last February, a recipient of our open letter, explains lack of answer from him, and there has been none from the individual succeeding to his duties. A friend has written suggesting that the ULT have in recent years co-operated with groups of other T.S. lodges in working together publicly and in attendance at their public meetings, and suggested their Annual Letter (addressed to their Associates), June 20-25, 1988 (and again, June 21-25, 1989) corroborates this. For a copy one should write to: United Lodge of Theosophists, 245 West 33rd Street, Los Angeles, California 90007.

E.T. Editorial Comment

And so the Responses are in. There are, of course, heads of T.S. Sections and/or Lodges, mainly in the Adyar International Society, who may not have received a direct copy of our Open Letter, as we are not in close touch with them. So what we show here cannot be presumed to cover all possibilities in the overall Theosophical Movement. Yet, from the important selection given, a picture can be drawn. Reluctance, hesitation, caution, silence— yet with some, the abiding belief in theosophic values, the ability and opportunity to discuss these informally, not for themselves alone, but for the whole Movement. Which is it to be? In response to an invitation from the editors of *Le Lotus Bleu*, official organ of The Theosophical Society in France, I sent them an article, which was published in their October 1988 issue. English-speaking readers will not have seen it and we have not published it in our *Eclectic*, not wishing in any way perhaps to influence answers that

might come to our Open Letter of January 15, 1989. But now we include it after these comments and let it speak for itself.

The dark years need all the Light that Theosophy can give. We know that earnest Theosophists of all Societies feel this and the urgency of right action that these times demand. Is it only in dream we hear the growing cry for Truth, the challenge to face things as they are—in the world and, more directly, in the whole Theosophical Movement? What then today is our duty? “We have one word for all aspirants: TRY,” writes the Mahatma K.H. (*The Mahatma Letters, Letter, Probation and Chelaship*, p. 247). “But still—TRY.” (p.348)

—W.E.S.

THE REAL TRIBUTE TODAY

Dear Friends of *Lotus Bleu*:

I have read with care the *Lotus Bleu* interview with the International President of the TS (Adyar), Mme. Radha Burnier, printed in your issue of June-July 1988, and I find it quite illuminating—in what it says and also what it avoids saying. Of the three main topics—(1) what HPB says about jnana yoga, (2) the “Judge Case”, and (3) fraternization or ‘networking’ among Theosophists, it is to the last that I would like to direct our thoughts.

Not only in this interview, but in all the sparse comment, openly written or spoken, by theosophical leaders today on this subject, there has been a begging of the issue. Everything is going fine, is the attitude, let things happen, let the grass-roots of the membership first speak, and then we’ll see. Is this what is needed?

The idea of theosophical co-operation, of unity and fraternization, is not new, but goes back to 1930, and in recent decades has in degree grown active again. The so-called grass-roots has indeed spoken out and consistently. We find magazines, such as Point Loma’s *Theosophical Forum*, Boris deZirkoff’s *Theosophia*, George Cardinal LeGros’ *Messiah*, our own *Eclectic Theosophist*, and others even within the Adyar administrative fold such as *The*

Canadian Theosophist, over many years advocating recognition of the soundness of the idea. John Coats, International President of the Adyar TS then, speaking at the 99th Annual Convention at Varanasi, India, Dec. 26, 1974, suggested a “Standing Committee where the representatives of different groups meet together quite freely and without any feeling of constraint to discuss mutual problems and exchange news and view. We could,” he added, “all probably benefit in this manner; and if such co-operation should lead one day to a closer working together, this could only be welcomed by all true students of the Wisdom.” More recently, Geoffrey Farthing, a one-time General Secretary of the English Section T.S. Adyar, offered a proposal addressed to “Presidents of the U.L.T., the T.S. (Pasadena), and the T.S. (Adyar), suggesting “a loose federation of the various, more important, elements of the Movement (see *Eclectic Theosophist*, July 1987). *Theosophical Network* magazine (Muskogee, Oklahoma), new born, labors valiantly for co-operative action today. An independent group headquartered in New York City, for which Michael Revere has been spokesman, this year sent out an Open Letter to Theosophical Leaders: “Is it Time for a Theosophical Summit Meeting?” (*Eclectic*. Sept/Oct 1988).

So time it would seem has been given to weigh the subject, to think wisely about it, and to choose what action to follow. Yet hesitation persists. Why?

As I view the theosophical scene, having been a lifetime witness and an active participant in some areas, the conclusion one reaches when this subject is broached can be summed up in a single word—Fear. Why? Fear that one’s own Society might suffer? Fear that certain ideas made almost into dogmas might be challenged and their foothold weakened and even shown as untheosophical? Fear that Leaders of the past, respected and loved, may be seen to be human and subject to human error? Fear, in other words, of the history of the past? All the various Theosophical Societies have shared in mistakes and stumblings. The unbiased historian can point to these; participants themselves know of them. When involved with a great and serious Movement of a spiritual nature, mistakes are not surprising. But does it help to deny them? Why can one not learn from them and go on courageously? Why today avoidance, unwillingness, to even meet and discuss a question of

such obvious merit? Why dismissal of what could affect beneficently the whole Theosophical Movement?

So we are led to ask ourselves, what can we do **today** for the whole Theosophical Movement? What indeed is demanded if we really recognize that it is the most serious Movement of the age, most needed in performing the work of protection and enlightenment for which it was founded? As a first step: Banish fear! Let the leaders meet and talk. And then see what further action is wise and profitable for all mankind.

Let me quote words spoken as far back as 1933. Dr. G. dePurucker was addressing in London members of the Phoenix Lodge and other lodges of the Adyar T.S. in England, meeting on that occasion with members of the Point Loma T.S. on May 7, commemorating White Lotus Day.

"Let us try to forget the differences which have kept us so long apart. Let us try to find those points of mutual agreement on which we can work together, each Society and each individual member of whatever Society retaining his or its own convictions, each member retaining his own fellowship in whatever Society it may be, if indeed in such Society the questions of his mind and the yearnings of his heart are answered, and if he feels satisfied. If not, let him join the Theosophical Society where he feels that light and comfort will come to him. Let us be Theosophists; in other words let us do the Theosophy that we preach; and then, then, we shall be paying a tribute of homage to our beloved H.P.B. which will not be on one night only, on one day only of the 365 of the annual cycle of days, but we shall be doing it all our life, and every day of the annual cycle. Ay, even now I can feel that lion—heart of H.P.B. beat in sympathetic answer to this plea; and you know as well as I do that if H.P.B. were here amongst us, she would say, Ay, ay...."

Yes, fifty long years ago! And where are we now? As we wrote in *The Eclectic Theosophist*, July-August of this year [1988], this could be a year of Test for Societies. Will Fear, however, still crowd in and compress the heart and constrict the mind? Or will the "Societies"—whoever and whatever they may be—having banished the spirit of capitulation to the 'easy thing to do', rise to the occasion, **and lead** where leadership has so far hesitated to lead?

It is not administrative unity that is called for, but a unity of heart and mind to consider what Theosophy *per se* can do today more effectively for the betterment of humanity. It is sharing with each other of ideas drawn from our highest thought, and then wise

and steadfast action in pursuing them—each Society or Group in its own honest dedicated way holding true to the *original impulse*, all serving that Spiritual Sun in which we have our very being.

Wisely in this interview given in Paris last February, the interrogator refers to H.P.B.'s Messages to the American Conventions written in the closing years of her life. We read them, these hundred years later. They are prophetic, powerful in admonition as well as in encouragement. And we find in them the practical guidance needed for wise action today. In Letter I, written in the same year as the publication of *The Secret Doctrine*, we read:

"...we are all fellow-students, more or less advanced..."

"...diversity of opinion, within certain limits...keeps the Theosophical Society a living and a healthy body..."

"...although there must be local Branches of the Theosophical Society, there can be no local Theosophists..."

In letter II, 1889:

"...the ethics of Theosophy are even more necessary to mankind than the scientific aspects of the psychic facts of nature and men..."

"...'UNION IS STRENGTH'; and for every reason private differences must be sunk in united work for our Great Cause."

And then quoting words from "letters written by the Masters," she concludes her Letter: "

Feel yourselves the vehicles of the whole humanity, mankind as part of yourselves, and act accordingly...(italics added). And herself concludes: "These are golden words; may you assimilate them!"

And Letter No. IV (1891), written a few weeks before her death:

" every wish and thought I can utter are summed up in this one sentence, the never dormant wish of my heart, 'Be Theosophists, work for Theosophy!' Theosophy first and last....Theosophy alone can save it [the Western world] from sinking entirely into that mere luxurious materialism in which it will decay and putrefy as civilizations have done. In your hands, brothers, is placed in

trust the welfare of the coming century; and great as is the trust, so great is also the responsibility..."

Finally we refer to words of H.P.Blavatsky in *The Key to Theosophy*, written a year after the publication of *The Secret Doctrine*. She says in its concluding chapter: "

I do not refer to technical knowledge of the esoteric doctrine, though that is most important; I spoke rather of the great need which our successors in the guidance of the Society will have of unbiased and clear judgment." And further she declares we should not be afraid of "adverse opinions..the sole salvation from intellectual stagnation and a beneficent good."

What HPB gave out is *not*, as some today suggest (thinking thus to 'keep up with the times') old hat, needing upgrading. The teachings she gave are part and parcel of the universal ethics, science, and behavior, if you will, of the universe itself and all its inhabitants. The forces in this sad world of ours that would destroy and desecrate are strong and in many areas today are running rampant. But our own guidelines are clear. They demand a strong speaking out, a challenge, an invitation, a great giving of heart-and-mind, from all Leaders and all members of the Theosophical Movement, something that will arouse the whole theosophical world to herculean constructive endeavor.

The call, in simple words, is for unflinching adherence to the *original lines* laid down by the Real Founders of the Theosophical Society, holding fast to that which is true. In this thought lies our real tribute to H.P.B.

—W. Emmett Small

FAITHFUL TO THE ESOTERIC TRADITION

Helen Savage Todd

Extracts from "The Writings of G. dePurucker" by Helen Savage, reprinted from *The Theosophical Forum*, December 1942. The writer was then one of the three editors of that magazine at Covina, California, where the Point Loma T.S. headquarters had moved in May of that year. And September 27th was the date of G. deP's sudden leaving us—47 years ago in 1942. We republish this article in memory of what he stood for, for the whole Theosophical Movement, and what he accomplished. —Ed.

Those who are Teachers of universal truth are not to be judged by the criteria of modern critical thought but according to the rules of the School from which they are sent. Faithful to the traditions of spiritual teaching, they do not ask that you shall accept on their authority what they have to give. They offer impersonally that which they have been entrusted with. Their work stands or falls *for each student* according to his own intuitional development. They never profess to have said the last word on any doctrine. They give out whatever the people of any time stand ready to receive. So it was with H.P.Blavatsky, and so it has been with Dr. de Purucker. He claimed no monopoly of truth, nor took to himself any special merit for fulfilling his duty in passing on that which he had learned. Openly expressed or tacitly understood was always the ancient motto: *Iti maya srutam. Thus have I heard.*

Yet while the literary works of Dr. de Purucker are utterly consistent with the message of H.P.Blavatsky—and therefore utterly consistent with the recorded wisdom of all ages—they are not a mere copy of what has gone before. There are no confines to truth. It is a living thing; and what nature proclaims as true by a thousand signs on every hand, cannot be cast aside merely because those of limited experience had not heard it before, or seen it written within the pages of a book. The marks of genuineness are unmistakable.

In the Preface to *The Esoteric Tradition* Dr.de Purucker quotes the famous passage from *The Mahatma Letters* (pp.23-4) in which the Master K.H. speaks of those 'universal ideas' which alone can give to man an understanding of his origin and ultimate destiny; those ideas which, in an irresistible tide, are destined to sweep over humanity, carrying before them tottering institutions, suffocating dogmas, and the wall of hatred and prejudice built by ignorance and shutting men away from each other; those ideas which, thus implanted on clean places, will help to bring about "a genuine, practical Brotherhood of Humanity where all will become co-workers of nature, will work for the good of mankind..."

G. deP. in all his teaching, and in his literary work which was primarily an outcome of that teaching, always held before his students this grand ideal. Theosophists who had the privilege of studying under

him during the past thirteen years were challenged to think in universals, to take the grand view of things, continually to expand in comprehension, and to refuse to let thought crystallize into dogma. To the extent that we answered this challenge we have the touchstone by which we can test any teaching in the years to come, discerning what is dross and what is gold, and thus safeguarding the precious ore of the Ancient Wisdom for the future....

The Esoteric Tradition, G. deP.'s largest and, as he sometimes said, his favorite work, first appeared in 1935; and a second edition in 1940, which latter is a virtual reprint of the first edition, with, however, a number of small emendations made and a few errors corrected by the author himself. ...This work is dedicated with reverence and devotion "To those who have bestowed the Priceless, and to their Sublime Cause"; and the earnest student cannot help but catch in its pages the atmosphere of loving care with which every theme is handled, the painstaking thought in exposition, and the meticulous thoroughness with which abstruse doctrines are explained. This, set alongside the author's brilliant scholarship, his wealth of allusion to oriental and classical works, his power to interpret Christian symbology, and above all his capacity to create the living picture rather than merely to labor the didactic point—all this places the book among the great contributions to Theosophical literature. But above and beyond all this even, is the ring of genuineness, the conviction that there is fidelity here, in general plan and in minutest detail, in spirit and in letter, to the esoteric tradition which is so preciously guarded by the Brotherhood of Teachers....

Dr. de Purucker did not live to see the publication of the voluminous Encyclopedic Glossary of Theosophical Terms which had been in preparation at the Theosophical Headquarters under his direction. But it is well to have on record that his own labor of editing and adding to the articles by the various compilers was completed before his passing, and he had turned over the MSS to the editorial office for final checking. It was his desire that the work should be published by Rider and Co. of London. Meanwhile the Mss. will remain in safe keeping at the International Headquarters here at Covina, California, awaiting the time when the world is again at peace and publication can resume its normal course....

Great books live for those who are themselves spiritually alive. It is only those who are small in comprehension who remain unstirred and see in the written word nothing but verbiage. For behind words are ideas, and we grasp ideas with something more than the ordinary mind. Across the pages of all GdeP's books march the great universal ideas of the Ancient Wisdom, with the cosmic spaces for backdrop and eternities for time-sequences. You cannot think small thoughts when you read his books. To know them is to come close to one for whom the whole universe breathed with divine and spiritual life, for whom Divinity spoke, not remotely in some far off heaven, but here at hand within the hearts of men.

"THUS HAVE I HEARD"

Vonda Urban

The recent Centennial Anniversary of the *Secret Doctrine* holds special meaning for students of the Ancient Wisdom. The celebration of H.P. Blavatsky's magnum opus, which first appeared in print in October, 1888, honors her and highlights the Teachings she brought. Today, no one can usurp her mantle of authority as the designated Lightbringer from the Brotherhood of Adepts. She carried their torch of truth to mankind at the dawning of a new messianic cycle, igniting the spiritual flame that will endure throughout the 2,160 years of the Aquarian Age. Irrefutable documentation of the Messenger and the Message is found in *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, which was compiled and first published in 1923 by A. Trevor Barker. These letters from the two Adept Brothers, Koot Hoomi and Morya, who undertook the task of giving out the current installment of occult knowledge through their mouthpiece, H.P.B., provide the ultimate source material on the modern Theosophical Movement and their chosen agent.

Two pertinent extracts from these letters are selected in illustration: the first example explaining the meaning of Theosophy that the Master K.H. gave to Mr. Sinnett to be included in his forthcoming book, *The Occult World*:

...Then you will of course, aim to show that this Theosophy is no new candidate for the world's attention, but only the restatement

of principles which have been recognized from the very infancy of mankind. The historic sequence ought to be succinctly yet graphically traced through the successive evolutions of philosophical schools, and illustrated with accounts of the experimental demonstrations of occult power ascribed to various thaumaturgists. The alternate breakings-out and subsidences of mystical phenomena, as well as their shiftings from one center to another of population, show the conflicting play of the opposing forces of spirituality and animalism. And lastly it will appear that the present tidal-wave of phenomena, with its varied effects upon human thought and feeling, made the revival of Theosophical enquiry an indispensable necessity... (Letter no. 8, pp.34-5, 2nd ed.)

Of special interest is the following insight into the mystery surrounding H.P.B.

This state of hers is intimately connected with her occult training in Tibet, and due to her being sent out alone into the world to gradually prepare the way for others. After nearly a century of fruitless search, our chiefs had to avail themselves of the only opportunity to send out a European *body* upon European soil to serve as a connecting link between that country and our own... Now, no man or woman, unless he be an initiate of the "fifth circle" can leave the precincts of *Bod-las* and return back into the world in his integral whole—if I may use the expression. *One* at least of his seven satellites has to remain behind for two reasons: the first to form the necessary connecting link, the wire of transmission—the second as the safest warrantor that certain things will never be divulged... (Letter no. 26, p. 203, 2nd ed.)

The above citations provide background on two pertinent facts: (1) that Theosophy was periodically reissued anew to mankind throughout the cycling millenniums; and (2) the special occult training H.P.Blavatsky underwent in Tibet in preparation for her work. These facts bear directly on the purpose of this article; namely, to *caution* against the current notion being discussed that her work is outdated and needs *editing* to be relevant today!! An immediate response to this idea asks: WHY?— and, WHO is qualified to edit or even question the work of the Mahatmans—the Teachers behind Theosophy?" But, revision of H.P.B.'s work is not new; *editing* began almost immediately following her death, on May 8, 1891, and the resulting alterations and deletions in all such "revised editions" are held, when compared with verbatim texts, to have only marred the original. The reason for this is made very clear in *The Mahatma Letters*, as follows. The first instance is in reference to H.S.Olcott assisting H.P.B. with *Isis Unveiled*. Master Morya, replying to Mr. Sinnett's questions on technical Teachings, writes in a footnote:

Bye-the-bye, I'll rewrite for you pages 345 to 357, Vol. I, of *Isis*—much jumbled and confused by Olcott, who thought he was improving it!" (Letter no. 13, fn. p. 77)

But the letter dealing with some mistakes in Theosophical Teachings in A.P.Sinnett's books, *The Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism* gives the underlying reason for such mistakes.

...Now we see that none but those who have passed at least their third initiation are able to write upon those subjects comprehensively. A Herbert Spencer would have made a mess of it under your circumstances. Mohini is certainly not quite right, in some details he is positively wrong, but so are you my old friend, though the outside reader is none the wiser for it, and no one so far, has noticed the real vital errors in *Esoteric Buddhism* and *Man*; nor are they likely to. We can give no further information on the subject approached by you and have to leave the facts already communicated to be woven into a consistent and systematic philosophy by the chelas at the headquarters. *The Secret Doctrine* will explain many things, set to right more than one perplexed student...—(Letter no. 63, p. 357.)

Those who have passed any initiation in chelaship, without failure, and also, students who aspire to live the life leading to the path of chelaship, hold only profound respect for the Teachings, as they were given, and the Messenger who brought them, recognizing it to be unethical to tamper, in any way, with another's work, notwithstanding good intentions.

There is a vast and distinct difference between commentary, discussion, or differing points of view in studying H.P.B.'s Teachings, and altering them. Are we forgetting that each one of the world's religions was, when given out to mankind, the appropriate installment of Theosophy fit for the time and civilization it served? Yet, as history records, corruption befell the pure teaching left by every Messenger as soon as their work passed into lesser hands, degenerating ultimately into creeds and dogmas dominated by the sacerdotal cast of the priesthood. Christianity is our *living* example of this, and contains, according to Dr. G. de Purucker, "...thirty-six thousand and some odd hundreds of mistranslations from the Greek original, as existing in the King James or Authorized Version..." —(*Studies in Occult Philosophy*, p.133)

The ever present danger threatening the purity of Theosophy will not happen so long as the entire output of H.P.B.'s work is available in verbatim text. Her miscellaneous articles, numbering nearly one

thousand, would be lost to the world forever had not Boris de Zirkoff, the foremost authority on her life and literary work, devoted his lifetime to preserving them "with no editing whatsoever of H.P.B.'s literary style, grammar or spelling." The *Blavatsky Collected Writings* series was completed posthumously with the publication of the final volume No. 14 of this set in 1985. It is of special importance to emphasize here that Mr. de Zirkoff's monumental achievement includes restoring to H.P.B.'s own wording and meaning a great deal of her material that previously had been altered or deleted by editorial hands. In view of this, it seems an irreconcilable incongruity that, on the heels of so great an accomplishment—and, likewise, on the heels of the Centennial Anniversary of the *Secret Doctrine*—is heard a current hue and cry to "edit!" Is it not only right and proper that each student be judge of H.P.B.'s writings according to his own intuitional light?—an intuition that may hear the *Voice of the Silence* say:

...Learn above all to separate Head-learning from Soul-wisdom, the 'Eye' from the 'Heart' doctrine...The first repeat in pride: 'Behold, I know'; the last, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess, "Thus have I heard..." (*Voice of the Silence* p.27)

—*Theosophical Network*, No.8,
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EVOKED FROM WITHIN

Godlike qualities lie sleeping with us, the spiritual things that mark us immortal...There is no limit to the possible expansion of human life and the growth of the Soul. The Soul is not a thing to be set aside and as it were locked up for awhile and brought out on occasions. It is that nobler part of our nature that rises to every situation and meets it with patience and courage; it is the power that often sweeps into a man's life unaware and carries him out beyond all brain-mind thought into the great broad road of service. It must be given breadth and scope and the large environment it demands. The knowledge of it comes not in any world-startling or magical way, and is not to be purchased save by the surrender of a man's passionate and lustful nature to the God within. It is a knowledge that steals upon us in the quiet of the

night-time and in all our peaceful moments, when we serve our fellows and ask for no reward but the glory that shines through the silence in him who has done his utmost, and the peace of mind that is for those who are striving. Through our smallest actions it may enter, when we are at our best and in love with what is truest and noblest, when we are in despair yet cling to our high ideals and dreams. Something comes home to us then and we say, *This will of mine is free that now but wavered and was surrounded and oppressed; I can look with perfect trust into tomorrow and into eternity.*

It is a knowledge that must be evoked from within. Each must earn it through his own efforts. It cannot be conveyed in words; the greatest of seers could not explain it, nor the greatest of orators make it clear. Each must find within himself the light and the key, the fire and redemptive stimulation, making his mind free and receptive as the flowers to the sunlight. But let a man seek it for his own sake, and all his efforts will amount to nothing. He must do it for the salvation of the race, aware that there is no separateness on the inner planes; that we are all brothers and our brothers' keepers, and that not until we get real knowledge of the inner self in our selves can we interpret our others selves, our fellowmen....

—Katherine Tingley, Extract from *The Wisdom of the Heart: Katherine Tingley Speaks*, Ch. 1 *Nature the Mighty Mother*, pp.16- 18.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE FUTURE

(Extract from *The Path*, May, 1886, from an article by the Editor, W.Q.Judge. entitled; 'Another Theosophical Prophecy')

The Sanskrit language will one day be again the language used by man upon this earth, first in science and in metaphysics, and later on in common life. Even in the lifetime of the *Sun's* witty writer [referring to an article in *The New York Sun* belittling a 'prophecy' printed in the first issue of *The Path*], he will see the terms now preserved in that noblest of languages creeping up in reviews, appearing in various books and treatises, until even such men as he will begin perhaps to feel that they all along had been ignorantly talking of 'thought' when they meant 'cerebration,'

and of 'philosophy' when they meant 'philology,' and that they had been airing a superficial knowledge gained from encyclopedias of the mere lower powers of intellect, when in fact they were totally ignorant of what is really elementary knowledge. So this new language cannot be English, not even the English acquired by the reporter of daily papers who ascends fortuitously to the editorial rooms—but will be one which is scientific in all that makes a language, and has been enriched by ages of study of metaphysics and the true science.

BOOK REVIEWS

Light of the Sanctuary: The Occult Diary of Geoffrey Hodson, compiled by Sandra Hodson, The Theosophical Publishers, Inc., Manila, Philippines, hard cover, 589 pp.

The dust jacket of soft pastels, the title in Gothic gold, hints at the jasmine-sweet cathedral echoes that resound through this book of six hundred odd pages. In the Preface Hodson reveals his contact with adepts of the 'Brotherhood of Luxor' since 1913. Often, his wife states, he would enter into the "white sheet state of hyperawareness", experiencing wonderful out-of-body states and communication with glorious devas and masters. While young he had a vision of the 'Kundalini-Deva,' and after his Christian confirmation he was bathed in a golden light for three days. When he went to a Besant lecture, he perceived her aura radiating streams of benediction to the world. He was privileged to fall under the influence of the 'maha-deva Bethelde,' and later he wrote *Fairies at Work and Play*.

Through Bethelde he became aware of the cooperation of the 'Order of Angels', and the wondrous representative of the 'Feminine Principle of Deity, the World Mother.' He visited the great occult center in Holland-Huizen, where, as students of theosophical history are aware, there occurred the conversion of the '12 Apostles' for the forthcoming avatara, by C.W. Leadbeater. Hodson says that he daily went into trance, and that wherever he went in the world the devas welcomed him with angelic greetings. Later in India an elderly yogi, one Shiva by name, taught him the arousal of the Kundalini force within him. In the chapter on *Angel and Fairy Work*, he speaks of the crown of glory being godlike, receiving angel mes-

sages, etc. Then: "Harold Baille- Weaver guarantees L400 per year to do healing work in London..the miracle has happened at last." Among entries in his diary: "Last night I was visited by Mary Magdalene, she was very beautiful." And while dictating at an advanced age, he admits he has yet to be visited by Jesus.

And so it goes for its more than 500 pages. Contrast the writings of the kind and gentle Mr. Hodson with "Notes by K.H.," Letter No. X, *The Mahatma Letters*, Section II, "Philosophical and Theoretical Teachings":

And now, after making due allowance for evils that are natural and cannot be avoided,—and so few are they that I challenge the whole host of Western metaphysicians to call them evils or to trace them directly to an independent cause—I will point out the greatest, the chief cause of nearly two thirds of the evils that pursue humanity ever since that cause became a power. It is religion under whatever form and in whatsoever nation. It is the sacerdotal caste, the priesthood and the churches; it is in those illusions that man looks upon as sacred, that he has to search out the source of that multitude of evils which is the great curse of humanity and that almost overwhelms mankind. Ignorance created Gods and cunning took advantage of the opportunity.

—*The Mahatma Letters*, pp. 57-8, Rider and Co.

How could this have happened? We turn to *The Secret Doctrine* for explanation:

Thus the first Atlantean races, born on the Lemurian Continent, separated from their earliest tribes into the righteous and the unrighteous; into those who worshipped the one unseen Spirit of Nature, the ray of which man feels within himself—or the Pantheists and those who offered fanatical worship to the Spirits of the Earth, the dark Cosmic, anthropomorphic Powers, with whom they made alliance....

Such was the secret and mysterious origin of all the subsequent and modern religions, especially of the worship of the later Hebrews for their tribal god....The legend of the "Fallen Angels" in its esoteric signification, contains the key to the manifold contradictions of human character; it points to the secret of man's self-consciousness; it is the angle-iron on which hinges his entire life-cycle;—the history of his evolution and growth.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, II, pp. 273-4

How then are we to regard those who, certainly well meaning though they may be, engraft religious concepts on a philosophy that admonishes us to look for principles, never personalities; who ask us to never degrade nature's forces by anthropomorphic

labels, which all earth's religions do? Continuing the quote from *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*:

Remember the sum of human misery will never be diminished unto that day when the better portion of humanity destroys in the name of Truth, morality, and universal charity, the alters of their false gods.

And in "Is Denunciation a Duty?", H.P. Blavatsky writes:

Ready to lay down our life any day for THEOSOPHY— that great cause of the Universal Brotherhood for which we live and breathe— and willing to shield, if need be, every true theosophist with our own body, we yet denounce as openly and as virulently the distortion of the original lines upon which the Theosophical Society was primarily built, and the gradual loosening and undermining of the original system by the sophistry of many of its highest officers. —*Lucifer*, Vol. III, Dec. 1888; also *BCW X*, pp.198-99

We have a duty to examine all things with discretion, and this book published in 1989 clearly reflects the continuing of the inertia of the Leadbeater era.

—Richard I. Robb

The New Testament Commentaries of H.P. Blavatsky, Compiled and annotated by H.J. Spirenborg. Point Loma Publications, Inc.

[Several reviews of this important book have been called to our attention. We give herewith one from England, and one from Holland. —Ed.]

This work will, I suspect, come as a surprise even to the dedicated student of H.P. Blavatsky's writings. Henk Spirenborg has collected together all the significant references to The New Testament in her published books. No serious student can fail to be aware of her citations from this source throughout her works, but prior to perusing the pages of this current book, few will have guessed just how much material exists on this subject. When collated in this form, it makes for fascinating reading. Undoubtedly it will be used as a reference work, and as such it will save the researcher much time in accessing the relevant passages. But it is more than just a reference book. As one dips into it, one is caught up in the sheer wealth of the material, and one finds oneself reading on, captivated by the exposition of the subject.

The book contains an introduction entitled, 'How to use the Book and the Notes' which explains how the work is laid out, the source used, the alternative sources and the translations of Greek, Hebrew and other terms. The bulk of the book follows the order of the New Testament: the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the

Epistles, and the Revelation. In the case of the section on the Gospels, it seems that nearly every verse has been the subject of comment by H.P. Blavatsky at one time or another. The other sections were, it transpires, somewhat less richly covered by her. A General Index is supplemented by two other indices which cross-relate the New Testament passages with H.P. Blavatsky's works.

A valuable addition to the work is the Notes appended to virtually every page which supplement and elucidate H.P. Blavatsky's own commentaries.

The work is a valuable addition to the library of the serious theosophical student. It is to be hoped that it might also persuade a wider audience to study H.P. Blavatsky's writings for themselves.

—Adam Warcup in *Theosophical History*, April 1989

Whoever would like to go deeply into the works of H.P. Blavatsky has to face two difficulties. Firstly, the content, mastering which requires a thorough, lengthy inner training. Secondly, the form. She was undoubtedly deficient in arranging her subject matter conveniently, and this defect she herself admitted frankly.

So we had to wait for one who possessed the faculty and patience to collect the fragments about a certain subject, scattered in Blavatsky's very voluminous works, in such a way that it would justify the subject and make it accessible to the student. H.J. Spirenborg—a thorough Blavatsky scholar and a member of the Theosophical Society (Adyar)—has succeeded in achieving an unsurpassable performance with respect to the subject The New Testament.

Two hundred pages deal with the texts of the N.T. which H.P. Blavatsky comments upon. Very helpful are the references to the bible texts, also in Greek, the various translations and explanatory footnotes. Another 150 pages give a well-ordered survey of the sources, the texts, the names and subjects.

All who would like to make a study of Blavatsky and the Christ mystery are now in a position to form a personal opinion on Blavatsky's relevant contributions.

—Albert Soesman, in *Informations of the Anthroposophical Society in The Netherlands*, April 1989. (This review translated for the *Eclectic* by Jan.H. Molijn)

Re OPEN LETTER (in March/April *Eclectic*)

With reference to our opening pages and responses to our Open Letter, those with suggestions to offer respondent to the main question are invited to do so, addressing *The Eclectic Theosophist*.